



RETURN TO WORK GUIDANCE AFTER COVID-19 ILLNESS OR EXPOSURE

FOR NON-HEALTHCARE EMPLOYEES

This guidance is to help employers determine when employees can return to work in non-healthcare settings following COVID-19 isolation or quarantine.

Category A: Individuals *with symptoms* and laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 a healthcare provider

Category B: Individuals *without symptoms* but have laboratory-confirmed COVID-19

Category C: Individuals who were exposed to COVID-19 without wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)

Category A: Return-to-work process for *individuals with symptoms* that have laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 or suspected of having COVID-19

- **Symptom-based strategy**
 - At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared **and**
 - At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (having no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications) **and**
 - Improvement in respiratory symptoms such as cough or shortness of breath
- **Test-based strategy**
 - Fever-free without using fever-reducing medications
 - Improvement in respiratory symptoms such as cough or shortness of breath
 - Two negative results, spaced at least 24 hours apart, based on authorized COVID-19 diagnostic tests by a medical professional

Category B: Return-to-work process for *individuals without symptoms* that have laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 or suspected of having COVID-19

- **Time-based strategy**
 - At least 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test. If they develop symptoms after their positive test, they should use the symptom-based or test-based strategy
- **Test-based strategy**
 - Two negative results, spaced at least 24 hours apart, based on authorized COVID-19 diagnostic tests by a medical professional



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- CDC recommends a 14-day quarantine after exposure. If the individual does not develop any symptoms during the 14 days, they can return to work.

All employees, including those returning to work, should:

- Wear a face covering if social distancing is not possible in the workplace
- Follow proper hand hygiene, respiratory, and cough etiquette (e.g., cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, dispose of tissues in the trash)
- Self-monitor for symptoms and seek medical care if respiratory symptoms return or worsen

Sources:

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Symptom-Based Strategy to Discontinue Isolation for Persons with COVID-19](#)

[Georgia Department of Health Return to Work Guidance After COVID-19 Illness or Exposure for Persons Who Are Not Healthcare Personnel](#)